

Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

Volume 41, Number 2

Fall, 1974

OCTOBER NATURE OUTING AND WORKSHOPS AT SUNNY RANCH
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

Once again members and guests of the St. Louis Audubon Society will be privileged to enjoy the warm hospitality of Burrell and Ruby Pickering at Sunny Ranch, near Foristell, Missouri. On Sunday, October 13, we have all been invited to spend the day with the Pickerings. Plan to arrive after 9:30.

Activities will be geared to both novice and expert alike, and will be conducted by experienced naturalists in the form of nature workshops. These will be conducted in the fields of birds, insects, pond life, wildflowers, mushrooms, trees, and geology. For your convenience, the Pickerings will erect prominent signs identifying the area in which each workshop will be carried out, and identifying the name of the leader of each group.

In addition to the planned workshop sessions, hikes of varying length can be made over the extensive network of well-marked trails maintained by the Pickerings, and the Nature Museum with its fine collection of birds, mammals, and nature lore will be open.

For those of us who have shared the warmth of an autumn day at Sunny Ranch in the past, this coming October outing will be a very special day, so bring your family, friends, field guides, and food, and join in the all-day fun.

Directions: Drive west on I-70 to the Foristell Exit, a distance of about 32 miles west of Lindbergh Boulevard. Turn left and head south on Highway T for 5 miles to Highway M. Turn right on M and proceed for 1-1/2 miles to Highway O. Turn left on O and go another 2 miles to the Sunny Ranch gate, which is painted red and is marked with a sign on a pole. Enter the gate and drive 1/2 mile to the Pickering home.

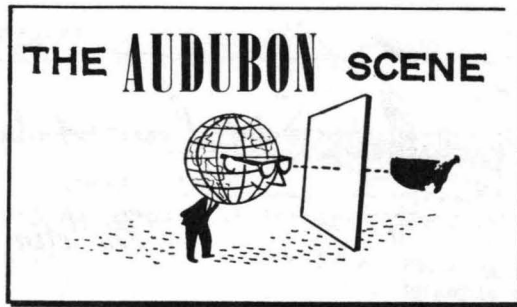


AUDUBON WILDLIFE FILMS



The Saint Louis Audubon Society and the National Audubon Society will again offer the Wildlife Film Series free of charge to the general public. The first film, FOOTLOOSE IN NEWFOUNDLAND will be presented by Tom Sterling on Friday, November 1st. Other films and dates in the series are: UPCOUNTRY UGANDA, Jeanne and John Goodman, November 29th; MALHEUR: MARSH, MEADOW AND MOUNTAIN, James Hammond, February 7th; FOUR FATHOM WORLD, Harry Pederson, March 21st; and ANIMAUX SAUVAGES (Wild Animals), Hank Kegel, May 9th.

Folders giving more details about the photographer-naturalists and the films will be mailed at a later date. Save the dates (all Fridays) and time (8:15) and plan to be in attendance at the Ethical Society of St. Louis, 9001 Clayton Road. We proudly call to your attention that it was our organization under the leadership of Wayne Short which inaugurated the Screen Tours thirty-two years ago. These films now are shown in 250 cities in the United States and Canada.



THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

—J. Marshall Magner—

While at times it may seem so, fortunately everything does not happen at once. In reviewing events for the past year pertinent to our St. Louis Audubon Society, I was amazed at the list of activities, events and problems which involved us at local, state, national and international levels. Uppermost, I believe, was the loss of our personal, but more important conservations', good friend, Earl Hath.

At the local level we have attended hearings, testified or presented written statements on the L15 Levee proposal, Maline Creek, Rush Island Power line, Gasconade Wild and Scenic River Study, Meramec Dam and Lake, Land Use, Jefferson County Mastodon Quarry, University of Missouri Weldon Spring property, Page Avenue and Brown Road proposed extension, to list a few.

State and Nationally we have spoken on the side of environmental protection and safeguards ranging from Mingo National Wildlife Refuge in Missouri to the Garrison Dam Project in North Dakota, and including predator control, mariculture, importation of exotic species, strip mining, off-shore drilling and atomic energy.

On the relaxing side we have had an excellent series of films, with matinees for school children, our outings to Sunny Ranch, spring and Christmas and eagle counts, many field trips, a visit from the Decatur Audubon Society, Annual Dinner at which we heard Executive Vice President Callison speak, and a members' meeting on the "Legislative Process."

Board members and others have given much time in assisting with special programs for Providence Education Center, Special School District, Boy and Girl Scouts, State Park Naturalists and have spread the word of conservation at "Educational Days" around St. Louis City and County.

This review of activities over the past months has touched the high spots and pointed up the efforts of a small part of our membership. Moral support is certainly necessary in any organization but many times when help is needed for some committee I think of all the talent available among our membership. More participation by more members would make possible many accomplishments in our conservation efforts toward finding answers to critical issues such as land use problems, resource conservation and recycling.

Our telephone answering service—727-2311—fills a public need to answer questions on what to do about a cardinal flying against a picture window; to do bluebirds ever have white eggs? But what I need is to know each of you. Won't you call or write me? Let me know how you feel about specific issues. When your board takes a stand on conservation issues, we believe it is what you want, but we do appreciate thoughts from all members. Better still, call me and say you will serve on one of the many committees. As I see it, if we all work together we can and will find solutions to the many environmental problems facing us today.

J. Marshall Magner

THE NATURE OF THINGS — PHOTOGRAPHICALLY!

—Lee Mason—

Award Presentations.—The winning display award photographs in the First Nature Photography Contest of the St. Louis Audubon Society will finish their year of tour around the metropolitan area this fall. During September they'll be on exhibit at the main branch of the St. Louis County Library, 1540 South Lindbergh; during October at the Missouri Baptist Hospital, 3015 North Ballas Road. The photographs will be presented to the winning photographers at the December 3 meeting of A.N.P.S. (Audubon Nature Photography Section) in the Clayton-Federal Savings & Loan auditorium, Elm & Lockwood, Webster Groves (7:30 P.M.).

The Fall Schedule of the A.N.P.S. is a Rich One

October 1 (Tuesday) 7:30 p.m. FIRST INDOOR MEETING OF NEW SEASON WILL BE A "SHOW AND TELL" SESSION. Place: Clayton-Federal Savings & Loan auditorium, Elm and Lockwood, Webster Groves. Let others see your photography. Bring a selection of your slides (vacation, at home, around the parks, birds, animals, flowers, insects, rocks, whatever). Your slides will be projected and you'll tell what they are about and how you took them. Put your name on each slide. Put a black dot in upper right-hand corner of slide mount — as you hold slide with image inverted and emulsion side away from you. NO GLASS MOUNTED SLIDES. Number of slides projected for each person will depend upon the number of participants. EVERYBODY WELCOME!

October 13 (Sunday) 10:00 a.m. ALL-DAY OUTING AT MERAMEC STATE PARK, Sullivan, Mo. Meet at dining lodge. Meramec's 7500 acres of rolling woodland drained by the Meramec River offer much for the nature photographers. Allow an hour for the drive and bring lunch.

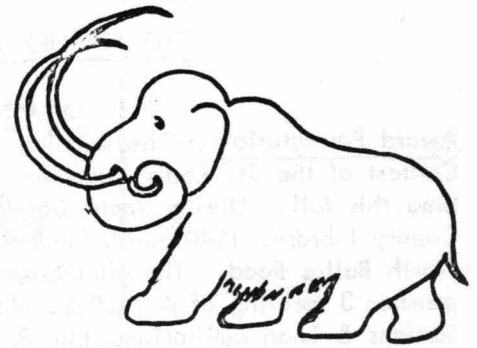
November 5 (Tuesday) 7:30 p.m. INDOOR MEETING. CLAYTON-FEDERAL AUDITORIUM, ELM & LOCKWOOD, Webster Groves. A SESSION ON "HOW TO DUPLICATE SLIDES" with expert discussion and demonstration by Color System Laboratories technicians. They'll answer your questions too.

November 9 (Saturday) 10:00 a.m. PHOTOGRAPHY OUTING — BABLER STATE PARK, Pond, Missouri. Meet at statue of Dr. Edmund Babler. Elevations vary as much as 380 feet in the park and good foot trails wind in and out of woodland, giving some long overviews. Fall color time. Bring lunch.

December 3 (Tuesday) 7:30 p.m. CLAYTON-FEDERAL AUDITORIUM, Elm and Lockwood, Webster Groves. WE'RE PROPOSING A REAL BLOCKBUSTER PHOTO TOUR VACATION FOR 1975 —The Masons will show their "THE HIGH COUNTRY" slide show as a teaser for this proposed photography trip to the fantastically beautiful San Juan Mountains of Southwestern Colorado. We will base at Ouray, a tiny mountain mining town, which is the hub of an area unbelievably rich in spectacular scenery, wild flowers (750 cataloged varieties), startlingly beautiful birds from tiny hummers through spectacular hawks and majestic eagles, and a wide range of furry creatures from an 8" pica through a lordly 900 lb. Wapiti Elk. The most magnificent spreads of colorful lichens and mosses shroud boulders and rocks above timberline (11,500 feet in Colorado). Right at Ouray are 19 distinct rock formations spanning geologic time for the rock hounds. There are ghost towns, ghost mines, and operating mines. A train ride over an original narrow gauge route. There's the country's best fishing in the San Miguel Valley. AND THAT'S JUST SOME OF IT! AND ALL WITHIN 50 MILE RADIUS OF OURAY! Photographically the two "best" times to visit are from the middle to the end of July for summer's wildflower best; and the middle to the end of September for the best of fall color and fall wildflowers. We'll show you bits of both seasons. If your response warrants the efforts entailed, we'll work out a tour and local programs that should make this one of the most memorable and enjoyable trips you've made. If you cannot come to the December 3rd meeting but are interested in the tour, write to the Masons or Charles Hill, A.N.P.S. Chairman, 2515 Guebert Road, Fenton, Missouri 63026, and be sure to say which month you prefer. Two weeks is the proposed time.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE EXHIBIT PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WILL BE AWARDED TO THE PHOTOGRAPHERS AT THIS DECEMBER 3rd MEETING.

MASTODON PARK
HELP US, PLEASE!!
THIS IS URGENT!



On May 23 last the Missouri State Highway Commission sold at auction for \$568,425 429 acres of surplus I-55 highway land to wealthy big city speculators to be "developed" with bulldozers and more asphalt. Hundreds of local citizens carrying placards marched in protest at the auction site.

On June 13 some 58 of these citizens journeyed to Jefferson City by bus at their own expense to plead before the Highway Commission for an 18-month extension of time so they could raise the money to purchase the land for a State Park. The Commission gave them 30 days.

That evening four determined, angry women organized the group into the Mastodon State Park Committee. Within two weeks they had \$20,000 in pledges from a community of 500 people at Imperial, Missouri, site of the acreage.

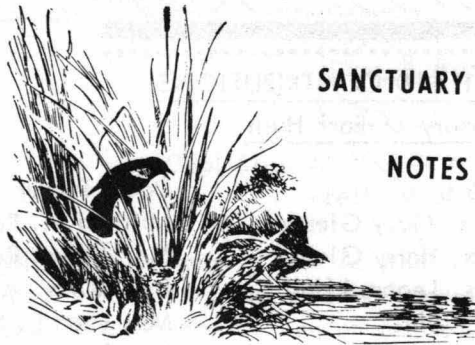
This land contains the last fragment of what archeologists the world over have called the richest burial ground of the prehistoric mastodon known to exist in the entire world. The land contains a free flowing spring, some almost virgin forest and caves. Purchased with taxpayer monies, the Committee feels it is the rightful heritage of the CHILDREN of the nation, NOT speculators. The MPC is backed in this feeling by the V.F.W., American Legion, City of Kimmswick, Open Space Council, Open Space Foundation, Sierra Club, Garden Clubs, etc., etc. Many of these groups plan fund raising events this fall and two of these groups have promised the MPC that their legal staffs are available to the Committee to throw this case into litigation to gain the time the Committee needs for fund raising if the Commission fails to grant the necessary time at their meeting in August.

The Mastodon Park Committee has had to overcome roadblocks thrown into their pathway by the Jefferson County Parks Commission, which was offered 20 acres of swampland by the big city speculators if the MPC would stop their efforts to obtain the entire 429 acres. This "generous" offer has now been reduced to five acres and the County Parks Commissioner is now out in the back roads areas trying to get petitions signed by those who may not have yet heard about the Committee to accept the five acres as a "park."

The Mastodon Park Committee has in writing by the Missouri State Park Board an agreement to accept, develop and maintain the 429 acres if it is donated to the Park Board as a gift, which is what the Committee plans.

Right now we need HELP in several areas. First, pledges of financial aid. These can be made to the General Chairman, Mrs. Lloyd Naes, P.O. Box 112, Imperial, Missouri 63052, or to the secretary. No cash or checks are asked for (although many have been received) at this time—only pledges, which will be held in escrow by the Open Space Foundation of St. Louis until such time as all funds have been accrued. Those wishing to send checks may make them payable to the Mastodon Park Fund. Secondly, we need LOTS of letters and telegrams to Governor Bond and to the State Highway Engineer, Mr. Robert N. Hunter, Missouri State Highway Commission, Jefferson City, Missouri 65101, requesting that the Mastodon Park Committee be granted their asked-for 18-month delay of sale. Thirdly, we need letters to Congressmen requesting their aid in procuring funds for this purpose be granted under the recently enacted Archeological Conservation Act. PLEASE HELP!

Dorothy Boyer Heinze
Publicity Chairman, Mastodon Park Committee
R. #4, Imperial, Missouri 63052 — Phone 314/467-5608



SANCTUARY

NOTES

To date the Audubon Sanctuary Committee has inspected six sites as potential locations for the Earl H. Hath Memorial Sanctuary. These six sites were considered interesting enough to have definite possibilities for our use out of approximately twelve properties that were brought to the Committee's attention. The general guide lines for the selection of a sanctuary site have been that the property be located close to the City within a maximum driving time of one hour and that it not be subject to undue flooding so that it would be available at most times of the year. In addition, it is felt that it must be suitable for multi-purpose use including the education and enjoyment of our membership and others as well as for the preservation of wild life.

The six sites which have been visited by most of the members of the Committee, have offered a wide variety of terrain and habitat from low lying marsh areas to river bluff and ridge areas. One of the first sites inspected is located near the new State Park recently acquired through the efforts of the Open Space Council on the Meramec River near Castlewood. This site has certain advantages typical of the bluff areas in this region, but is not receiving further consideration because of the limited size of the property, difficult access, and the fact that it is not contiguous with the new Park.

Also held in abeyance for the time being are two sites in the North St. Charles County area which were considered because of their potential for wild fowl observation during the migratory seasons. After due consideration it was decided that these sites had experienced serious flooding in recent years and would have limited access during those times of high water and would be further restricted from use during the duck hunting season.

Still under serious consideration for recommendation to the Board, are three sites which have many features considered desirable for our sanctuary purposes. All three sites are of a size that would make it possible to offer refuge to wild life with the plus of being attractive from the standpoint of botanical potential and other ecological areas of interest to our members.

Two of these sites are close to other areas in which our Audubon Society has an interest from the standpoint of observing migratory and resident birds, so that they could be visited while making a birding trip. It is felt that these sites have definite potential in meeting our sanctuary purposes as outlined above.

The Committee plans to study these three sites carefully and hopes to make recommendations to the Audubon Board of Directors soon. However, nothing has been finalized and it is the desire of the Committee to receive and consider any sites submitted by our members. We urge you to make known to us any property that might qualify and be available as a sanctuary and we will follow through and check it out. Please contact anyone of the members of the Committee listed below.

Don Menke, Chairman — 962-1000

Henry Day — 961-4559

Edgar Denison — 821-9971

Leo Drey — 725-7676

Gary Giessow — 994-7570

Elizabeth Golterman — 1/479-4120

Warren Lammert — 991-1210

Bertha Massie — 993-4926

Mary Wiese — 965-2310

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The Audubon Society has an answering service with the Coalition for the Environment. The number is 727-2311.

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Coal Strip Mining — A Burning Issue
—Betty Wilson—

Some of the questions in controversy are: To what extent should we consider the considerable environmental impact of stripping, as balanced against benefits of energy production and economics? Should there be a nationwide ban on all such operations? Should all coal that can be obtained profitably by stripping be strip mined as demanded by the coal lobby? To what extent will land reclamation practices be followed?

The controversy has centered around major legislation efforts in both houses of Congress. The Senate bill S 425 is the stronger of the two and provides criteria for states to designate certain areas as unsuitable for strip mining. The bill, introduced by Senator Jackson, passed the Senate by a vote of 82 to 8 last fall. As Senator Jackson told the Senate: "Federal legislation to regulate coal surface mining and reclamation is a crucial measure to insure an adequate energy supply while preserving and maintaining a satisfactory level of environmental quality."

A weakened, but still worthwhile, strip mine bill, HR 11500, was reported after months of delaying tactics by the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. The full force of HR 11500, as reported by the Committee, would not be felt for at least 30 months, to give states time to pass laws and develop regulations to meet long-range reclamation and environmental standards.

However, preliminary rules to go into effect after 120 days would, with federal enforcement, eliminate many of the worst abuses of current strip mining practice. These standards would forbid operators to leave behind exposed highwalls, prohibit dumping downslope in steep terrain, require restoration of mined areas to the approximate original contour, require the segregation and restoration of topsoil and better revegetation. They would also regulate the construction of waste-water impoundments in order to prevent washouts and flood disasters. Another important feature of the bill is that it would prohibit strip mining in national forests.

HR 11500 recently passed the House although final amendments are not yet available. It must now go to a Conference Committee to iron out differences between it and S 425. A Conference Committee report will be sent to both Houses of Congress to be voted upon.

With our increased national reliance on coal, the regulation of surface mining has become more important, as has the need to make underground mining more economical. Since only a small percentage of our coal resources are strippable, it cannot be argued that the regulation of strip mining will have an adverse effect on our energy supply.

Senator Henry M. Jackson, in a talk to the National Coal Association on July 18, 1974, warned the industry against attempts to undermine effective strip mining legislation in the hope that Congress will settle for weaker legislation. Jackson, sponsor of the Senate bill, said, "Those who adopt this approach, in my view, misread the temper of Congress and the intensity of public concern on this issue."

Jackson pointed out that in the past the industry has fought strip mining bills far less stringent than present legislation. "The delay in enacting legislation, caused largely by industry's opposition, has brought the nature and scope of the strip mining problem more sharply into focus," he said. "The need for strong regulation of strip mining practices is more apparent—to more people—than ever before."

Further, the Senator pointed out that "Congress is not prepared to sacrifice legitimate environmental goals without compelling justification."

PLANTS OF SOUTHWESTERN MISSOURI

Art Christ

On our May botany field trip to Barry, Stone and Taney Counties, we found many species of plants that we had never previously seen growing in their natural habitat. As we were near Roaring River State Park in Barry County, we saw a group of tall white-flowered plants along the roadside. This plant was Hymenopappus scabiosaeus, which has no common name. It belongs to the composite family. The white petal-like bracts of the involucre are showy, while the creamy-white corollas are fragrant, and the leaves are much dissected. While we found this species throughout the area, it grows only in six counties of Missouri.

In Roaring River State Park there were plants of Tradescantia ozarkana, a spiderwort, growing in moist ledges at the base of wooded bluffs. It varies in color of petals from white to pink, rose or lavender. This species is limited to four counties of southwestern Missouri. Also at Roaring River State Park there were a few plants of Cladrastis lutea, Yellow Wood, a tree found only in this area. Thousands of these handsome and rare trees had been exterminated by dams created on various sections of the White River.

In the Eagle Rock area of Barry County, we found Delphinium Treleasei, Trelease's Larkspur. This deep blue or blue-purple flowered larkspur is known only from Missouri. A low shrub of the spurge family, Andrachne phyllanthoides, buck brush (not related to the buck brush of our area) was found in abundance, but is restricted to a small section of the Ozark region. This low shrub is the only woody member of the predominantly tropical Euphorbiaceae to extend as far north in its range as Missouri. Juniperus Ashei, Ashe's juniper, grows in four counties in southwestern Missouri. This juniper differs from our common Juniperus virginiana, red cedar, in having the trunk more or less branched near the base, and in having a rounded top. The white-flowered climbing milkweed, Matelea Baldwyniana, was fairly common in this area. The climbing milkweed found in the St. Louis area has brownish-purple flowers.

On the rocky wooded limestone bluffs of the White River, there were plants of Cotinus obovatus, American smoke tree. The bluish-gray smokelike appearance of the fruiting sprays, as seen from a distance, account for the common name of smoke tree. Nearby was Clematis versicolor, one of the species leather flowers which resembles Clematis Pitcheri found in the St. Louis area. We searched for Callicarpa americana, French mulberry, but were unable to find this shrub. The only station known in Missouri for this species was exterminated by Table Rock Dam.

Along the roadside near Table Rock Dam there was a tall plant with deep rose or wine-purple flowers on long and very slender peduncles, with the leaves at the base of the plant. This showy plant was Callirhoe digitata var. digitata, fringed poppy mallow. This area was a glade or barren and was quite extensive. Here we found Echinacea paradoxa, the yellow-flowered species of the purple cone flower. The ray flowers are golden yellow and the stems are glabrous. Scutellaria Bushii, a skullcap that is found in this area, has light blue flowers. After much searching we found Pentstemon Cobaea var. purpureus, a large-flowered beard-tongue with the violet or rose-purple flowers very large and showy, and resembling the flowers of the cultivated foxglove.





CONFUSING FALL WARBLERS

—Jack Van Benthuyzen—

To most people who have learned to identify birds using Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds, it is enough to boggle one's mind when you come to Plates 51 and 52 marked "Confusing Fall Warblers." It would have been better had he merely titled these two plates as "Fall Warblers — Female and Immatures." When the word "confusing" is added, identification immediately becomes more difficult. In fact, most fall warblers are not confusing and the difficulty lies in separating out a few of the species. If Peterson had titled separate plates for "Confusing Fall Shorebirds," most birders would have readily acknowledged the confusion.

In all but several of the warblers, the same basic field marks apply both in spring and fall. The only problem which makes identification somewhat more difficult is the addition of the immature birds — and in the fall the immature birds predominate during migration — only the adult male bay-breasted warbler changes drastically in the fall whereas all other adult warblers retain the spring field marks. The adult male chestnut-sided and myrtle warblers lose much of their distinctive spring coloration, but always retain the basic main field marks. The male chestnut-sided always retains some trace of the chestnut markings and the myrtle retains the yellow rump patch.

With the exception of the chestnut-sided and bay-breasted, all immature warblers seen locally are washed out or paler versions of the spring adults. The immature chestnut-sided can be identified by its distinctive green back, white underparts and narrow eye-ring. The immature bay-breasted is very similar to the immature blackpoll and can sometimes only be separated by the blackish feet instead of the pale yellowish or greenish feet of the blackpoll. Some of the immature bay-breasted warblers do retain buffy underparts.

A great deal of stress has been placed on using wing-bars as a field mark key. Determination by this method helps eliminate about one-half the warblers, and does provide a starting point. But in each of the warbler species there are other more important field marks which are used for individual identification. After most observers have learned to adequately separate the spring species, the absence or presence of wing-bars is sometimes forgotten. Then, too, a few of the species such as yellow and palm, the wing-bars are almost too faint to be noticed.

Therefore, the most important aid to identification of fall immature warblers is a good field knowledge of spring identification.



ST. LOUIS AREA SPRING AND SUMMER BIRDING MAY, JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST

—J. Earl Comfort—



The St. Louis area birding during the late spring and summer featured warbler hunting during the earlier part of the period with shore-birding winding it up (May 15th through August 15th). Warbling was excellent, resulting in 37 species being tabbed during the spring migration. There was the usual seasonal summer birding lull with only the more enthusiastic birders making regular nature trips during this off-season. Migrant shorebirds began to excite us as early as mid-July. Each season gave us an outstanding listing. On May 23rd the Webster Groves Nature Study Society Thursday group came up with an exceedingly rare Louisiana Heron in the Illinois-Mississippi River Levee area below the Jefferson Barracks Bridge. On July 28th Mildred Schaefer, of Alton, Illinois, contributed a red phalarope in St. Charles County near West Alton. This phalarope is a strong candidate for "bird of the year." Of course, both rarities were put on the hot line. Unfortunately, neither rarity stayed around long enough to stand up and be counted. Among the hot line phalarope listers were Viola Bucholtz, Kathryn Arhos and Dick Anderson.

Here are some of the interesting facts about these two unusual visitors, which were well out of their normal range. Perhaps they decided to see how the other half of the United States world lives. We are glad they did.

The Louisiana Heron is a member of the big tribe of herons and their allies, of which 10 species occur in the St. Louis area, ranging from rare to fairly common. This includes the long-distance traveler, the cattle egret, which made the trek from Africa all the way up into Canada in a relatively short time. Around St. Louis its status has changed in the past 15 years from very rare to common. There is apparently no danger this bird will become a nuisance and pose a threat to our native species as most of our ill-advised imports have. But it is a pioneer, not an import. Having made the long journey this heron is not about to fade out.

The range of the Louisiana heron is in the southern part of the United States where it is a rather common permanent resident. It is also known as the tricolored heron.

Our recent Louisiana heron was the second visit by this species in the past few years, the other being in the same vicinity.

The 25" Louisiana heron is similar in size and color to our common little blue heron except for the white underparts and brown on the back of the Louisiana species. The sexes are dressed alike.

Other local members of the family besides the herons and egrets are the bitterns and ibises. An ibis of any kind is extremely rare around St. Louis. A Louisiana heron is classed as accidental or casual. We birders dig these accidentals.

Phalaropes are unique shorebirds with only three representatives in the big family. They are the Wilson's, northern and red. In the St. Louis area the Wilson's is fairly common, the northern rare and the red so rare our recent listing had the local birders in frenzy. In fact, the red is supposed to migrate off shore around North America on all sides along our shores. It nests in the far north in the Arctic.

Phalaropes apparently decided sticking to the script was for the (other) birds. Although they may wade like the other shorebirds, they are capable of swimming. The surface of the water may be their dining table. When they toil they spin during their dizzy lunch period. This spinning is quite effective since it stirs up insects which are stabbed in a humorous fashion. The diner spins now to the right, now to the left, now in reverse until it has gleaned a meal of tid bits. The red is the greatest spinner of the three.

Phalaropes are the original Woman's Libbers, as are the other shorebirds. They permit no male chauvinism. All of the house work is usually done by the males, which do everything but lay the eggs. Even the coloring of the phalaropes is against the book. They probably never read a bird book, which shows the male is far more gaudily dressed when there is a difference in the plumage of the sexes. A male rose-breasted grosbeak is a good example. We wonder how he fell for his plain sparrow-like mate. Maybe he thinks a rose (breast) by any other color is OK.

The phalaropes will have none of this. The female red in breeding plumage is bright red below with a white cheek and brown stripes on the back. The wing is blue, bordered with white. The short, thick bill is yellow with a dark tip. The other two phalaropes have longer and thinner bills. In winter plumage the phalaropes show faded colors. Our recent red was in partial breeding plumage. It may well be our only modern area red found in Missouri. On October 3, 1952 the late Julian Neill and I found an area red phalarope in what is now Frank Holton State Park in East St. Louis. The hot line brought other listers on the following day. You will find the phalaropes at the bottom of your checklist of shorebirds. This means they are farther advanced than the other shorebirds. No wonder they are libbers!

Other areas visited most often by St. Louis area birders during the period were St. Louis Forest Park, the levees, the August A. Busch Wildlife area in St. Charles County, Big and Little Creve Coeur Lakes in St. Louis County, and Shaw's Garden Arboretum in Franklin County and Shaw's Garden in St. Louis. The birders included local and out-of-town visitors. One out-of-towner created a big stir when he was escorted to our famous European tree sparrow at the Museum of Science and Natural History in St. Louis County by Dick Anderson and Bill Groth. The honored birder was the Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger.

GOOD NEWS ON THE MERAMEC

A new and positive approach to the Meramec Dam controversy has been launched with the formation of the Meramec Basin Regional Council. Its purpose is, through utilization of the great reservoir of professional and scientific expertise in the State, and the participation of representative citizens from the Basin counties, to recommend constructive alternatives to the Dam. Presently, the Council consists of a Board of Directors, headed by Joseph Cushing of Steeleville. Other members are Rex Campbell, rural sociologist at the University of Missouri, Columbia, Robert Lindholm, of the Attorney General's Staff, and counsel to the Clean Water Commission, and myself. Jerry Sugerman, who knows more about the Meramec Basin and the implications of the Dam than anyone, bar none, and John Lark, regional planner, have done the planning and leg-work to put the concept together. At this time, efforts are underway to raise \$25,000 to set up an office, employ a minimum staff, and gather the relevant information together to submit a proposal for a federal grant for the study. When operational, the Council will include 2 representatives from each of the Basin counties. These citizens will evaluate the response expressed at public meetings where information will be presented by the professional consultants from St. Louis University and other institutions.

In spite of the fact that the Meramec has been called the most studied river basin, the facts have always been put together with two thoughts in mind: where can the river be dammed, and how can the damming be justified. Questions relating to the best use of the land, the best development for the residents of the Basin, what effects dams would have on the lives of those residents, and an objective appraisal of the pros and cons of a variety of solutions, have never been answered. The Corps of Engineers, who are limited to planning for water development, have manipulated data to prove their case. It is certainly in the best interests of all, those who object to and those who favor the dam, to be sure all the facts are in perspective, and all considerations have been explored. This the Regional Council plans to do.

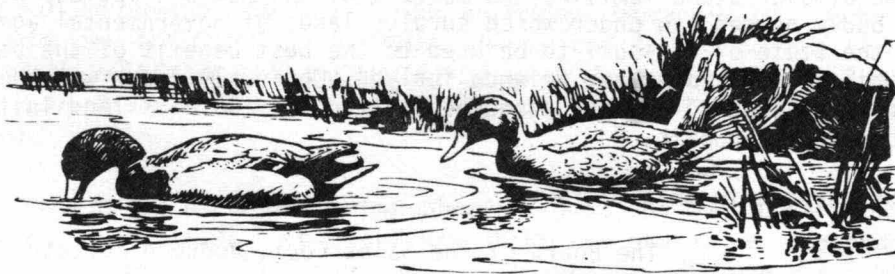
There appears to be much interest in the lower Meramec at this time. This is all to the good. But the upper river, with its clear—not muddy—water, its unspoiled shoreline and magnificent bluffs, and its great potential for giving Missourians a marvelous natural recreational site close to St. Louis, is being written off. Before this priceless part of our heritage is destroyed, we must make sure it is the right solution.

The Audubon Society has donated \$400 to the Council, which made possible an attractive brochure. This is available on request to any individuals who would like to contribute or who could enlist conservation-minded friends for this cause.

The Council has been incorporated as a not-for-profit organization under Missouri Law. While awaiting tax-exempt status, the Sierra Club Foundation is accepting its funds, to ensure tax-deductibility. Donations should be made out to: Sierra Club Foundation, with MBRC Fund noted on check, and mailed to Charles E. Kopman, MBRC Fund, 408 Olive Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63102.

This is a real opportunity for Auduboners to do something constructive for conservation close to home.

SaLees Smith Seddon
MBRC, Board of Directors



calendar.....



ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY FIELD TRIP SCHEDULE - SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER 1974

Date	Areas Covered	Meeting Place	Leader
Sat., Sept. 28, 8:00 a.m.	August A. Busch Wildlife Area	Shop Lake	Kathryn Arhos
Sat., Oct. 19, 8:30 a.m.	Swan Lake/Pere Marquette Park	Parking lot, Mo. side Alton Dam	Dick Anderson
Sat., Oct. 26, 8:00 a.m.	Creve Coeur Lake/St. Charles County	West City Shopping Center (under Dove)	Jack Van Benthuyssen
Sat., Nov. 9, 8:00 a.m.	August A. Busch Wildlife Area	Shop Lake	Kurt Wessling, Jr.
Sat., Nov. 23, 8:30 a.m.	St. Charles County	Parking lot Mo. side Alton Dam	David Jones

WEBSTER GROVES NATURE STUDY SOCIETY.—Midweek birding trips will continue as usual. For information on Wednesday trips call Sallie Phillips, 821-2216. For Thursday trips call Helen Bowman, 531-1748 or Rose Ann Bodman, 961-2583.

AUDUBON FIELD TRIPS.—For further information about St. Louis Audubon Society trips call Kurt P. Wessling, Jr., 961-6687.

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OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR CHRISTOPHER S. BOND

The Honorable Christopher Bond
Jefferson City, Missouri

Re: SURPLUS LANDS OF MISSOURI GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

Dear Sir:

The citizens of our State witnessed recently the sale of so-called surplus land by the Highway Department despite emphatic protest by many organizations and individuals. We are now seeing the University of Missouri dispose of a large tract of land near St. Louis and the Busch Wildlife Area.

To most citizens this procedure of public land disposal appears incongruent and ill advised. These governmental agencies act like private, profit-oriented corporations in disposing of land which really is not theirs, but belongs to the people of Missouri. That the Highway Department did not at some time in the past pay for this land is obvious, but it does not follow that this purchase necessitates future benefits to highway users only. After all, we who use those highways would also benefit from the wise use of such surplus real estate.

An independent Highway Department cared nothing about the wishes of Missouri citizens that a park be created which is much needed. Nor is the University of Missouri interested in the needs for recreation of the St. Louis metro area and is insensible to the tragedy if this beautiful area is destroyed by industrial developments. In the latter case, the land was not even purchased but obtained free of charge from the Federal Government for a specific purpose.

In the name of over 2,000 families and members of the Audubon Society we urge you to sponsor a badly needed law under which surplus lands of governmental agencies would revert to the State of Missouri to be used to the best benefit of the people. Such a sponsorship would create many friends for you. Obviously, some watchdog arrangement would be needed to guard against agencies "sitting on" surplus land instead of making it available to the public.

We ask your support in this matter.

The Board of the Saint Louis Audubon Society

